

FOLIA SLAVICA

THE MORPHOLOGY OF CASE IN SOUTHEAST SERBIAN DIALECTS

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The southernmost dialects of Serbo-Croatian, called the Prizren-Timok or Torlački dialects (hereafter referred to simply as Torlački), are worthy of more study in the field of morphology than has been devoted to them. Linguistically and geographically, Torlački stands between the Kosovo-Resava dialects of Serbo-Croatian and the Macedonian and Bulgarian languages. Torlački contains features of both groups, phonological and morphological, innovating and conservative. In many cases, Torlački appears to be so similar to one of the other languages that the question was raised as to whether these dialects were really Serbo-Croatian, or Macedo-Bulgarian. That these dialects are basically Serbo-Croatian has been demonstrated by N. van Wijk (1956:104). One of the features of Torlački which is truly midway between Serbo-Croatian and Macedo-Bulgarian is the degree of loss of declension. While Serbo-Croatian distinguishes as many as five oblique cases (P. Ivić 1959:194),¹ and Macedo-Bulgarian has virtually no cases except for a few remnants. Torlački preserves various distinctions in the substantive, pronoun, and adjective which differentiate it from both Serbo-Croatian and Macedo-Bulgarian. This paper will examine some of the forms and functions of case in Torlački and briefly discuss some theories of case in connection with the facts of these dialects.

Before proceeding, it will be necessary to make some geographical and grammatical definitions. For practical purposes, the eastern, southern, and southwestern boundaries of Torlački can be identified with the borders of Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Albania, respectively (see map p. 88). The fourth boundary is a line starting at a point on the Albanian border just south of Dečani, going to the confluence of the Lab and Sitnica rivers, then east of Podujevo and west of Prokuplje to Stalač, then almost due east to the Bulgarian border (P. Ivić 1956:99). There are three main Torlacki dialects: 1) Timok-Lužnica (*timočko-lužnički*), spoken east of a line running northward from south of Kriva Feja to the confluence of the Lužnica and the Vlasina, to a point just east

of Svrljig, to the boundary with the Kosovo-Resava dialect at Sleme; 2) Svrljig-Zaplanje (*svrljiško-zaplanjski*), spoken in a narrow strip north of Surdulica, east of Niš, south of Sleme, and west of the Timok-Lužnica area; 3) Prizren-South Morava (*prizrensko-južnomoravski*), spoken in the rest of the Torlački area (P. Ivić 1956:114-6). (These dialects will be referred to as the 1) Timok, 2) Zaplanje, and 3) South Morava dialects.) There are both phonological and morphological bases for the above mentioned tri-partite division, but only those differences connected with case will be mentioned, and only when relevant to the discussion.

For the purposes of this paper, case will be regarded primarily as a morphological category marking the relation of substantives, adjectives, and pronouns to various words in the sentence by means of affixes and/or suppletive stems (cf. Jakobson 1936:55 and Fillmore 1968:21). While a syntactic, i.e., purely functional, definition of case can be both fruitful and enlightening, especially for dialects like Torlački, which express some case relations syntactically, it is also true that a study of the strictly external manifestations of case can lead to a more thorough understanding of these particular dialects and of case phenomena in general. Hence, the view of case, as well as the names given to the cases, will be essentially traditional.

In Torlački, substantives, adjectives, and pronouns can be inflected for case. Substantives have inherent gender, adjectives have variable gender agreeing with the gender of the substantives they modify, and pronouns are distinguished by the fact that they cannot be modified by adjectives or adverbialized adjectives (Lunt 1952:27,34,36).² In this discussion, only the declension of substantives and personal pronouns will be considered. To cover the other declensional systems would complicate matters unnecessarily, since the rest of the pronouns are declined as adjectives, and since the adjectives mark the same kind and number of distinctions as the substantives they modify.³ Hence *noun* will refer to substantives, adjectives, and the nonpersonal pronouns, although all the examples will be substantives. *Pronoun* will be used to mean only the personal pronouns.⁴

Pronouns mark case in both the singular and the plural; nouns, in general, mark case only in the singular, if at all. Substantives can have special marked plurals, e.g., quantifying and collective (Belić 1905:323 and P. Ivić 1959:194), but synchronically these are phenomena of number and not of case (cf. Stankiewicz 1965).⁵ Torlački noun declension is restricted by gender as well as by number. Only

those nouns which have an accusative formally distinct from the nominative in the standard language (which represents an older situation), i.e., masculine animate nouns and feminine nouns in /-a/, have a *casus obliquus* to oppose to a *casus rectus* in Torlački. Hence neuters, masculine inanimates, and feminines ending in a consonant usually do not distinguish case at all.⁶ The South Morava dialect also has a dative case for nouns, differentiating it from the other two dialects, which use such dative forms only sporadically.⁷ The distribution of the dative in terms of gender is approximately the same as that of the *casus obliquus*. (Henceforth *accusative* will be used for *casus obliquus*, and *oblique* will be used to refer to nonnominative cases in general.) Table I is a paradigm for the words 'person or man, road, brandy, love, wine' which are masculine animate, masculine inanimate, feminine in /-a/, feminine in a consonant, and neuter, respectively.⁸

Table I

	m		f		n
N	čovék	drum	rakíja	ljubóv	vinó
A	čovéka	----	rakíju	-----	----
(D	covéku	----	rakíje	-----	-----)

The occurrences of other case forms in Torlački are limited to poetry, fixed expressions, and results of non-Torlački influence, e.g., *na putu* 'on the way', *u prvoga rata* 'during the first war', etc. (Broch 1903:66 and Belić 1905:336-37).⁹

The pronouns have three forms--enclitic, full, and doubled (one full plus one enclitic)--whose forms will be given here and whose functions will be explained below. Although the threefold case distinction exists only for some nouns in part of the dialect area, all the Torlački dialects have preserved the opposition nominative/accusative/dative (or in Lunt's terms (1952:37), absolute/direct/indirect) in at least some of the pronouns. Table II presents the main forms.

Now that the forms of the Torlački cases have been established, their functions can be examined. An oblique case form can occur either in a verbal or a nominal construction, either with a preposition or without one. That this latter is the major dichotomy is evidenced by the fact that the pronouns, which preserve the most distinctions most consistently, have a special form, the full form, which occurs only with prepositions (P. Ivić 1959:194).¹⁰ The enclitic form occurs in most other positions, and the doubled

Table II

	N	Ǟ	Ǧ	Ǻ	Ǫ
1s	ja	me	mi		mén(e)
2s	ti	te	ti		téb(e)
rx	--	se	si		séb(e)
1p	mi	ne	ni		nas
2p	vi	ve	vi		vas
3sm	on				
		ga	mu	njég(a)	njému
3sn	onó				
3sf	oná	ju	joj	njú(ma)	njójzi
3pm	oní				
			(g)i		gim
3pn	oná	(g)i	or	nji	or
			i(m)		njím(a)
3pf	oné				

form is employed mainly for emphasis--where the ordinary full form would be used in standard Serbo-Croatian, other than with a preposition (P. Ivić 1959: 194). Prepositions occur only with the accusative case (for nouns and pronouns which mark case), and their relation to nouns and pronouns is entirely syntactic. There is a great deal of vacillation in their use and meaning, depending on both context and dialect, e.g., *prez* can mean 'across, without, through, over, etc.,' and *na* 'of, to, on, at, in, by, for, onto, toward, etc.' (Belić 1905:307-8, 653-4). Since the question of the use of specific prepositions is more one of lexicon and context than of morphology and syntax, the task of listing them will be left to a later investigation (cf. Belić 1905:653-4). The most interesting situations for study are those in which oblique case forms occur unbound by a preposition, for it is in these instances that Torlački is most clearly differentiated from Macedonian and Bulgarian, which also use prepositions to express case functions.

There are four environments in which an oblique case form without a preposition can occur; two are verbal and two are nominal: 1) accusative object, i.e., the direct object, 2) dative object, e.g., the indirect object or the ethical dative, 3) partitive accusative,¹¹ and 4) dative of possession. The prepositionless occurrences of cases can be represented as in Table III. It is interesting to note that there appears to be a parallelism between the doubled and enclitic dative pronouns in verbal constructions (*méne mi/ mi*), e.g., *méne mi dáva/ dáva mi* 'He gave me,' and the pronominal adjectives and dative enclitic pronouns in nominal constructions (*moj/mi*), e.g., *mója ćerka/ćerka mi* 'my daughter.'

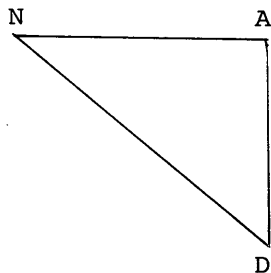
Table III

Construction	Case		Marginal Dative
	Accusative	Dative	
Verbal	<i>će ga nájdem</i> 'I'll find him'	<i>će mu kažeš</i> 'you'll tell him'	
	<i>najde ga njéga</i> 'he found him'	<i>dójde mu njému</i> 'he came to him'	
	<i>píjé rakíju</i> 'he drank brandy'	<i>(će te dádem sídu)</i> 'I'll give you over to the judge'	
Nominal	<i>čáša rakíju</i> 'a cup of brandy'	<i>mojému sínu dučán</i> 'my son's store'	(see discussion)
		<i>čérka mu</i> 'his daughter'	

The facts of case in Torlački provide interesting material for the examination of various theories of case. One example from each of three classes of case theories will be chosen (cf. Kuipers 1962:231-3): Jakobson for the semantic approach, Kuryłowicz for the semantic-syntactic approach, and Gołąb for the syntactic approach.¹²

If one were to apply Jakobson's method to Torlački, the result might be a triangle.

Table IV



If Jakobson's generic meanings were to be retained, A would be opposed to D only as nonmarginal/marginal, and both would be opposed to N as directional/non-directional. The limitational meanings of the standard Serbo-Croatian genitive are divided between A and D, while the meanings expressed by the locative, instrumental, and some genitive constructions of standard Serbo-Croatian are carried by A with a preposition in Torlački (M. Ivić 1961:41). One might question whether 'central direction/marginal direction' is the essence of the distinction between the

Torlački A and D. Insofar as verbal constructions (i.e., a noun in syntactic relation with a verb) are concerned, this opposition could be interpreted as direct/indirect (Lunt 1952:37). The question of nominal constructions, however, is more complex. A nominal construction is a phrase containing two nouns in a lexicosyntactic relationship where one noun is in the nominative and the other is in the accusative or dative and the two nouns are not connected by a preposition; an accusative nominal construction has a partitive meaning, and a dative one is possessive. The former is quantitative in Jakobson's terms; the latter is qualitative. While a partitive construction is clearly nominal, the possessive dative often appears to be indistinguishable from the ethical dative, in which case there is a neutralization of the opposition nominal/verbal in terms of the referrant of the dative noun.

Sometimes word order or context seems to help disambiguate a dative; e.g., *Brášno dáva ekmédžije* 'He gave flour to the baker' (Pavlović 1939:165) has a clear indirect object. Similarly, *Před čára dówele i čérku mu i dávola* 'Before the emperor they led both his daughter and the devil' (Pavlović 1939:256) contains a clear possessive dative because of the position of the enclitic. Likewise, *Óno je skúpo pósito mi páre sére* 'It (a donkey) is expensive because it shits money for me' (Broch 1903:91) uses an ethical dative if the dative possessive pronoun has to follow the thing possessed. (*Pósito* 'since' is a conjunction.) It may be that *pósito páre mi sére* literally 'because money to me it shits' would be ambiguous: *mi* could be possessive for *páre* or an ethical dative if it refers to *sére*. (The possibility of *mi* being a genuine indirect object is excluded by the context and our sense of cleanliness.) In one text from Vranje, the following phrases occur: *Kadóšija muž vu od oránje ...* and *Kad (ná večer) dóšija vu muž od oránje ...* 'When (in the evening) her husband came to her from ploughing ...' (Broch 1903:100,102). It is not clear whether the difference in order conveys a difference in meaning other than a stylistic one--such questions must be checked with a native speaker. The following sentences all appear to neutralize the distinction possessive/dative object (nominal/verbal), and it is not clear with which word the dative is in syntactic relation:

A múž vu počéja da gu láše 'And her husband began to lie to her' (Broch 1903:100)

A bráda mu se zadržésla od múku 'And his beard shook with grief' (Stanojević 1911:445)

Prv brat otvoriv đávolu ústa 'The first brother opened the devil's mouth' (Pavlović 1939-256)

Muž mi je lud 'My husband is crazy (to me)' (Broch 1903:101)
Stráža došla u dvor nêkojezi babe 'The guard came into the
 courtyard to some old woman'
 (Pavlović 1939:254)

It appears that while the accusative has an additional marking for limitational (in Jakobson's terms) because of its partitive use, the dative seems to be able to neutralize the opposition nominal/verbal by being possessive and objective. (It is interesting to note that a similar neutralization is performed in a different manner by the genitive in other Indo-European languages.) In terms of the entire Torlački case system, the dative is more restricted geographically, and it is more marked than the accusative because it cannot normally occur with prepositions.¹³ Its relation to the distinction nominal/verbal requires further investigation.

The problems with a purely semantic approach have been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Kuryłowicz 1960:136,149-50, Ebeling 1955:222). Kuryłowicz attempts to be more precise and more syntactic. He insists that prepositional phrases should be considered as part of the case system and that the case ending on a noun preceded by a preposition is only a formal implication of that preposition (Kuryłowicz 1960:132). Since all prepositions in Torlački take the same case, however, the problems elaborated upon earlier, with regard to prepositions, remain. Using Indo-European as his basis, Kuryłowicz writes that the nominative, accusative, and genitive constitute the core of the case system, by their having primary syntactic functions (p. 145). The other cases all enter into the system only by virtue of their secondary functions (their primary functions being adverbial) as combinatorial variants of the primary grammatical cases (p. 147). While this theory accounts for the origin of some Torlački adverbs in locative and instrumental case forms, e.g., *kradom* 'stealthily' (the primary function was generalized, and the secondary function was lost), it does not explain the position of the dative in Torlački. The Torlački dative performs functions filled by the genitive in other Slavic languages such as Standard Serbo-Croatian, Polish, and Russian. This, coupled with the fact that the dative occurs almost exclusively without prepositions and nonadverbially, shows that the Torlački dative is a primary grammatical case in Kuryłowicz's terms (cf. M. Ivić 1961:42 on the status of the dative in Standard Serbo-Croatian). So case in Torlački is a purely grammatical, syntactic phenomenon according to Kuryłowicz's method, since the concrete i.e., semantic, meanings of cases are expressed by adverbs (and by prepositional phrases).

While Kuryłowicz's theory relies on both semantic and syntactic criteria, Gołab's approach is a purely syntactic multilevel one, similar to that of the transformationalists. Using a Bühlerian concept of syntactic connotation, Gołab (1967:49-57) proposes a classification of verbs according to the number and kind of places each connotes, i.e., whether the verb is transitive or intransitive, occurs optionally or obligatorily with a subject and/or object(s), and the cases or case-like constructions by which the objects are realized. Thus verbs can be classed as having zero to three places, depending on the presence or absence of a subject, direct object, and indirect object or prepositional phrase. The place classes can be subdivided according to whether the verbs are transitive or intransitive (or copulative), and those verbs which have some sort of object can be classified according to the case or preposition which is connoted for the object--the distinction between optional and obligatory being maintained throughout. This method provides a purely syntactic means for classifying all occurrences of cases and case-like constructions in predicated forms. A comparative classification of Standard Serbo-Croatian and Torlački, following this model, would show exactly how the dialect handles relations expressed by case in the literary language, in verbal constructions. Table V is a brief outline of the categories which can be determined by applying the place classification method to a Slavic verbal system. The examples are third person singular present indicative of literary Macedonian verbs, since these are often closer to the Torlački situation than literary Serbo-Croatian.

Perhaps a similar method could be used for nominal determination. This should not be too difficult with the partitive accusative, since only certain nouns are likely to quantify other nouns in such a manner. But possessive datives and nouns linked to non-verbs by prepositions present problems which require further investigation.

The foregoing account has attempted to point out some of the possibilities and problems in studying a system which is midway between a conservative Indo-European-type case-using one, e.g., Literary Serbo-Croatian, and an innovating type (at least in the nominal system) which has lost almost all but the last pronominal vestiges of case, e.g., Macedonian. It is interesting to note the symmetry in the preservation of free case forms in verbal and nominal constructions, the formal similarity between a direct object and a partitive 'object,' and between a dative object and a possessive.

Table V

- I. Zero-place verbs
- 1) Subjectless intransitive (impersonal)
grmi 'it thunders'
- II. One-place verbs
- 1) Subjective intransitive (without lexical prefix)
odi 'he goes'
 - 2) Subjectless transitive (objective)
mu o'leknuva 'it is easy for him'
- III. Two-place verbs
- 1) Subjective intransitive (with lexical prefix)
vleguva 'he goes in'
 - 2) Subjective transitive (with direct object)
tepa 'he hits'
 - 3) Copula and copula-type
e 'he is' *stanuva* 'he becomes'
- IV. Three-place verbs
- 1) Subjective transitive (with direct object and indirect object or prepositional phrase or spatial complement)
dava 'he gives'

NOTES

¹The vocative is excluded because it serves an appellative rather than a syntactic function, and thus does not express the relation between words in the sentence, but the relation between speaker and addressee (cf. Belić 1905:302).

²Although these definitions are from a grammar of Macedonian, they can be considered valid for the South Serbian dialects, which are morphologically quite similar to Macedonian.

³The one possible exception to this statement is the case of adjectives modifying feminine nouns ending in consonants (or rather, nouns ending in consonants, which are sometimes feminine), where there is hesitation between expressions such as *za tvoju ljubov* and *za tvoj ljubov* 'for your love' (Stanojević 1911:399). But this is really a problem of gender, rather than of case, and it is only mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

⁴Before continuing, something must be said about accent. Torlački has neither phonemic pitch nor phonemic length, but it does have phonemic stress. Morphophonemic alternations can occur in the course of declension, e.g., *ruká/rúku* 'hand N/A' (Belić 1905:377), but the facts that the variation from place to place is so great, that the role of stress in Torlački is

still in the process of being studied, and that morphophonemic stress alternations in the declensional system are not distinctive, make it necessary to exclude such considerations as the functioning of stress from the scope of this paper. Thus, while stress will be marked in the examples wherever possible, only the endings and suppletive stems will be examined.

⁵There are also remnants of oblique plurals in parts of the South Morava area, but the vacillation between using /-i/ and /-e/ in the nominative and accusative plurals of masculine substantives is so great that one can merely comment that this feature is in a state of great flux in these sub-dialects, and that it seems that the ending /-i/ is becoming generalized (Pavlović 1939:167). The existence of a dative plural in /-am/ for masculine and feminine animates in Sretečka Župa is an anomaly, but it may be noted that the feminine accusative (singular) is weakest here (Pavlović 1939:169).

⁶In some of the North Timok dialects, however, the words for 'mother' and 'daughter' are anomalous: N *mâti/dâšti*, A *mâter/dâšter*. In some areas the A has become generalized for both cases. From this there comes a new regular paradigm: N *mâtera* or *materjâ/dâštera* or *dâšterjâ* A *materjû/dâšterjû*. But these dialects also have various reflexes of the common *mâjka* and *čérka* (Stanojević 1911:405-6).

⁷It is interesting to note that in Sretečka Župa, near Prizren, where the dative is most consistently and widely preserved, the *casus rectus* is being generalized for all functions in the feminine noun, except for the dative, e.g., *Nékoj đavol ūzev cāreva čérka* 'Some devil carried off a king's daughter' (Pavlović 1939:254).

⁸Throughout this paper: N=nominative, A=accusative, D=dative, m=male, f=female, n=neuter, s=singular, p=plural, rx=reflexive. A breve (˘) over an abbreviation indicates an enclitic form, a macron (ˉ)--a full form, e.g., Ā=accusative enclitic. If there is no mark it means unspecified. Words in parentheses may be omitted in any of the dialects.

⁹It should be noted that the dative can (although it almost never does) occur with a neuter noun denoting a person, e.g., *Detetu se poe kât ěe spije* 'One sings to a child so it will sleep' (Pavlović 1939:162).

¹⁰This is not entirely true, despite P. Ivić's assertion; a full form may occur without a preposition, e.g., *Njěga izgorěše* 'He was burying it up' (Belić 1905:407). But such instances are extremely rare and appear to be limited to border areas.

¹¹It should be noted that this partitive is entirely accusative in form and does not differ even by stress, e.g., *čāša rakĭju* 'a cup of brandy' and *častĭla ga sās rakĭju* 'She treated him to brandy' (Belić 1905:309).

¹²The choice of Jakobson over Hjelmslev was due to the greater applicability of the former's theories to Slavic. Kuryłowicz was preferred to Ebeling and de Groot because his approach is most independent of Jakobson (e.g., in the treatment of prepositional phrases). I have changed the name of Kuipers' third category by omitting the word 'transformational'

and by adding some names of people, and have chosen Goļab over Fillmore and Worth for the first-named's great concern for "surface" structure, which is being dealt with here. On a "deeper" level, Torlački would probably look like Serbo-Croatian or Macedo-Bulgarian, the only difference being case transformations or deletions late in the grammar.

¹³The dative might have an additional marking of unboundness, since it cannot occur with a preposition, while A can occur with or without one. But this would be a syntactic rather than a semantic criterion.

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Map showing boundaries of the Torlački area.